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This study analyzed variance in county extension chairmen's (CEC) conformity to an administrative performance leadership (APL) concept of their role. Relationships between APL and agent morale and performance, CEC attributes, and CEC relationships with agents, were assessed. Results were reexamined after adjusting for effects of sex, level of education, tenure, and career satisfaction in reports by observer agents. Major findings were: (1) CEC conformity to an APL role concept appeared significantly related to agent morale and performance; (2) chairmen who considered the APL concept very important had higher APL scores; (3) personal characteristics of agents had essentially no effect on coefficients for measures (managerial support, equality, support in conflict situations) of CEC-agent relationships. Findings suggest that, where they provide agents with managerial support, minimize status distinctions, and support agents in conflict situations, CEC are more likely to negotiate certain obstacles (agent resistance and limited time) and conform more closely to the APL role concept. (Nine tables and two references are included.) (ly)

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Correlates of Administrative Professional Leadership in the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service*

by

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A summary of study highlights
presented at the National Seminar
on Adult Education Research
Toronto, Canada
February 9-11, 1969

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Introduction

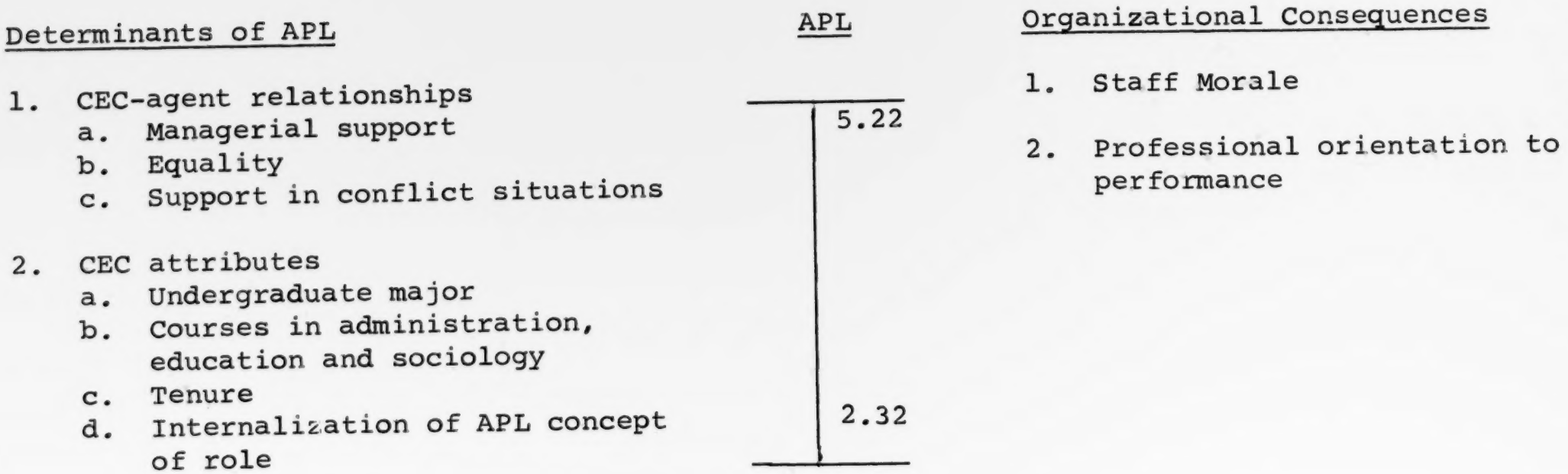
An emerging concept of county Extension organization and administration has resulted in the creation of the County Extension Chairman (CEC) or Director position with staff leadership responsibilities in a number of state Extension Services. The North Carolina Extension Service created the CEC position in 1962 with occupants being expected to provide leadership for and coordinate the efforts of agents in developing an effective county Extension program. In this study, the efforts made by CEC to coordinate and influence agent performance were designated as Administrative Professional Leadership (APL).

The purpose of this study was to examine selected correlates of variation in CEC conformity to an APL concept of their role. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Examine the relationships between APL and two measures of organizational consequences (agent morale and performance).

2. Examine the relationships between APL and selected determinants (CEC-agent social and working relationships and CEC attributes).

3. Examine the above relationships after adjusting for the effects of sex, level of education, tenure and career satisfaction on variation in agent-observer reports.



Agent-Observer Personal Characteristics

1. Sex
2. Level of education
3. Tenure
4. Career satisfaction

Figure 1. Overview of variables examined in study.

Research Issues

Organizational Consequences

The first objective of this study was to examine the assumption that the degree to which CEC conform to an APL concept of their role would have important consequences for the County Extension Service. In advocating that CEC conform to an APL concept of their role, Extension administrators assume that, among other things, it will have a positive influence on agent morale and performance.

In reviewing the literature on the role of administrators in professionally staffed organizations, one finds conflicting arguments advanced.[1] The arguments center around the professionalism-authority issue and they are usually polarized in one or the other of two positions. One argument maintains that when administrators provide a high degree of staff leadership, the results are higher staff morale and greater productivity; hence, greater organizational effectiveness and efficiency. The other argument maintains that the role of administrators should be restricted to providing for the normal routine functioning of the role system because professionals seek independence and autonomy in their work and, when this relationship is achieved, there is greater staff morale and productivity.

This study assumed that a high degree of leadership provided agents by CEC would have a positive influence on agent morale and

performance. If high APL scores are associated with high agent morale and performance scores, then some support exists for advocating the APL concept of the role of CEC. However, if the reverse is true, then there is perhaps little point in encouraging CEC to try to influence the performance of agents.

Determinants of APL

The second objective of this study was to examine the relationships between APL and selected leadership determinants. The theoretical formulation was adapted from a generic model developed by Gross and Herriott[2] for studying organizational leadership in professional settings. The formulation is based on assumptions about socialization experiences and organizational forces affecting administrators of professionally staffed organizations.

This study proposed that variation in CEC conformity to an APL concept of their role was based, in part, on the premise of a three-phased process of socialization for CEC. The first or preparatory phase refers to the period of formal education at the college or university level. During this phase, most agents receive technical training in agriculture and home economics. Emphasis is on technical subject matter competence and not socialization for Extension work nor administration in Extension. The second or organizational reality phase begins

when employed by Extension. After reporting to the county for work, the agent no longer deals strictly with the ideas of textbook authors or his professors or of his Extension socializers; rather, he now confronts a varied set of values, attitudes and convictions of people with and through whom he must work. The agent is now dealing with the "real thing" of trying to get along with people and at the same time attempting to interest people in acquiring new skills, attitudes and knowledge that hopefully will result in the adoption of recommended practices.

The third phase is designated as <u>administrative preparation and reality testing</u>. CEC have been able to make some adjustments to the stress-strain reality world of Extension since they are required to have had experience in Extension. No specific formal training program is required of agents prior to assuming the role of CEC; however, only interested agents are considered. Occupants for the CEC position are selected by supervisors and local leaders based on past performance and perceived APL potential. While on the job, CEC have many opportunities to engage in both formal and informal administrative preparation experiences. Even though all CEC have some administrative preparation, tempered with experience and continuously engaging in administration preparation, it is assumed that they encounter difficulty between their somewhat idealized concept of their role and their actual reality testing as an administrator of a

professional staff. Subscribing to APL standards is one thing, but actually conforming to them is quite another.

Of the many obstacles that CEC might have to negotiate in order to conform to an APL concept of their role, two were postulated. The first obstacle postulated was the professional status of agents and the second was limited time because of the heavy demands made on their time.

Agents, like CEC, have completed formal training at the college or university level and have been judged to have the competence to perform Extension work in a relatively autonomous manner. The possibility exists, therefore, that agents might interpret efforts of CEC to influence their performance as an invasion of their professional prerogatives. Suggestions from a CEC to an agent in regard to solving a problem encountered by the agent may be viewed as interfering with the agent's rights as a professional Extension worker. Or the agent might interpret it as a lack of confidence on the part of the CEC in the agent's ability to solve problems. Thus, the fact that agents have professional status might lead them to resist the efforts of CEC to provide APL.

Two major assumptions have been made. First, that CEC have internalized to some degree an APL concept of their role through the process of socialization. Second, that during their administrative reality phase the obstacles of agent resistance

and limited time must be negotiated in order to provide APL to agents. If these assumptions are tenable, it follows that the APL given agents will be a function, in part, of those conditions that will lead to either maintaining, reducing or overcoming these postulated obstacles. Specifically, the central thesis of this study was that (1) those conditions perpetuating the postulated obstacles to APL would serve to decrease APL and (2) conditions reducing the obstacles or permitting CEC to overcome them would serve to increase APL.

Variation in Agent-Observer Reports

The third objective of this study called for examining the findings after adjusting for variation in agent-observer reports attributable to selected personal characteristics. The nature and design of this study specified that agents recall past observations on the behavior of CEC. Therefore, a logical and legitimate methodological question can be raised regarding the findings. It is possible that the findings might not be attributable to variation in behavior observed, but rather to agent-observers themselves.

There are at least two possible explanations of variation in agent-observer reports. One explanation maintains that agent-observers might be systematically biased either for or against CEC. A second explanation maintains that variation in agent-

observer reports might be due to actual variation in the behavior of CEC. In other words, CEC just might behave differently toward different agents at different times and under different circumstances.

To examine the problem of variation in agent-observer reports, four agent-observer personal characteristics believed to be potentially important in this setting were adjusted for in the analysis of data. These characteristics were sex, level of education, tenure and satisfaction with Extension as a career.

It was assumed that, if agent-observer personal characteristics accounted for greater variation in APL than did the CEC-agent relationships, then some empirical basis existed for saying the findings were really more dependent upon agent-observer characteristics than variation in CEC-agent relationships. However, if after adjusting for that portion of variation in APL attributable to agent-observer characteristics, a significant relationship remained between CEC-agent relationships and APL, then support existed for the possibility that CEC were behaving differently toward different agents at different times and under different conditions.

Research Hypotheses

The symbolic expressions used in expressing a priori positions on expected relationships between variables are:

1. $\xrightarrow{+}$ is the symbol for a positive relationship between variables varying in the same direction for either high or low scores.

2. $\xrightarrow{-}$ is the symbol for a negative relationship between two variables varying in opposite directions.

The research hypotheses are:

H_1: APL (X_{10}) $\xrightarrow{+}$ Staff morale (Y_3)

H_2: APL (X_{10}) $\xrightarrow{+}$ Performance (Y_4)

H_3: CEC-agent relationships ($X_1X_2X_3$) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_1)

H_{31}: Managerial support (X_1) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_1)

H_{32}: Equality (X_2) $\xrightarrow{-}$ APL (Y_1)

H_{33}: Support in conflict situations (X_3) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_1)

H_4: CEC attributes ($X_4X_5X_6X_7X_8X_9$) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{41}: Undergraduate major (X_4) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{42}: Administration (X_5) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{43}: Education (X_6) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{44}: Sociology (X_7) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{45}: Tenure (X_8) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{46}: Internalization of APL concept of role (X_9) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

Table 5. Summary of variables used in this study

Variable	Symbol	Score	Comments
		419 agent-observers of CEC	
APL	Y_1, X_{10}	419 means; 6-point scale	High means indicate greater CEC conformity to APL concept of role. Avg = 4.16
APL county average	Y_2	79 means; 6-point scale	APL means for each county averaged to get one APL score for each CEC. Avg = 4.16
CEC-agent relationships:			
Managerial support	X_1	419 means; 6-point scale	High means indicate more managerial support given agents by CEC. Avg = 3.30
Equality	X_2	419 means; 6-point scale	Low means indicate greater equality in CEC-agent relationships. Avg = 2.57
Support in conflict situations	X_3	419 means; 6-point scale	High means indicate more support given agents in conflict situations. Avg = 4.35
		79 CEC	
CEC attributes:			
Undergraduate major	X_4	1-2	1=social sciences (N=33) 2=technology (N=46)
Courses in administration	X_5	0-6	Actual number of courses taken by CEC. Avg = 1.27

Table 5 (continued)

Variable	Symbol	Score	Comments
Courses in education	X_6	0-9	Actual number of courses taken by CEC. Avg = 3.20
Courses in sociology	X_7	0-6	Actual number of courses taken by CEC. Avg = 1.58
Tenure in Extension	X_8	8-34	Actual number of years employed by Extension. Avg = 21.59
Internalization of APL concept of role	X_9	79 means; 6-point scale	High means indicate greater internalization of APL concept of role. Avg = 5.23
		419 agent-observers of agents	
Organizational consequences:			
Staff morale	Y_3	419 means; 5-point scale	High means indicate greater staff morale. Avg = 4.37
Performance	Y_4	419 means; 5-point scale	High means indicate greater professional orientation toward Extension work. Avg = 4.48
		419 agents	
Agent-observer personal characteristics:			
Sex	C_1	1-2	1-female (N-209) 2-male (N-210)

Table 5 (continued)

Variable	Symbol	Score	Comments
Level of education	C_2	1-4	1=BS only (N=101) 2=BS + (N=280) 3=MS only (N=24) 4=MS + (N=14)
Tenure	C_3	1-34	Actual number of years employed by Extension. Avg = 10.45
Career satisfaction	C_4	419 means; 6-point scale	High means indicate greater career satisfaction. Avg = 4.39

Methodology

This study is a part of a larger organizationally sponsored investigation of correlates of APL. Data for testing hypotheses on correlates of APL were obtained from a sample of 79 CEC and 419 agents. During the first three months of 1968, a team of five researchers visited each of 79 counties and administered separate survey forms to agents and CEC. CEC and agents voluntarily completed the survey forms in private and sealed them in envelopes with assurances of response anonymity. Since the measurements on several of the variables were based on agent-observer reports, it was decided to include only those counties with three or more agents. The average number of agent-observers per CEC was 5.3.

The surveys were developed by the researchers drawing on previous studies of leader behavior description and measurement. Many of the items were adapted from the instruments used by Gross and Herriott (1965). Items were also adapted from job descriptions of agents and CEC. The survey forms were pretested followed by item analysis to examine the degree of item descrimination.

The major data reduction technique used to group items having an underlying commonality was the principal components method of factor analysis. Statistical techniques for testing hypotheses included simple and multiple correlations and regression analysis.

Appendix Table 5. Factor matrix loadings of a within-county analysis of the reports of 419 agent-observers on 22 Administrative Professional Leadership statements

Statement[a]	Principal component[b] 1	2
Eigenvalue	13.338	1.056
Cumulative %	.606	.654
13. Encourages agents to develop and maintain high levels of professional attitudes.	836	038
17. Gives agents assistance in coordinating the Extension program with other individuals, organizations, and agencies.	830	104
19. Strongly encourages agents to be creative and innovative in their work.	825	011
16. Strives to eliminate weaknesses in all aspects of the total county Extension program.	824	102
21. Helps agents to understand the background factors of important problems they are facing.	820	199
9. Takes a strong interest in agents' professional development.	813	-019
8. Has constructive suggestions to offer agents in dealing with their major problems.	804	-035
20. Shows equal interest in promoting all areas of the county program, including 4-H, home economics, community development, and agriculture.	802	040
2. Performs his work in such a way that it inspires agents to upgrade their performance standards.	802	-282
3. Gives agents the feeling that they can make significant contributions to the development of their clientele.	794	-325
12. Recognizes and rewards agents who are doing an outstanding job.	786	059

Appendix Table 5 (continued)

Statement[a]	Principal component[b] 1	2
Eigenvalue	13.338	1.056
Cumulative %	.606	.654
1. Gives agents the feeling that their work is an "important" activity.	779	-328
4. Encourages agents to discuss freely their role as professionals.	768	-308
6. Promotes discussion as needed to clarify relationships between the roles of the CEC and agents in programming.	768	-232
15. Considers "what is best for all of Extension's clientele" in decisions affecting Extension's program.	757	324
5. Makes suggestions to all agents, when warranted, on needed program changes in 4-H, home economics, community development, and agriculture.	753	-128
7. Makes staff conferences a valuable educational experience.	738	-188
10. Supports, coordinates, and provides in-service training for staff members.	737	051
22. Makes staff assignments consistent with the maximization of competencies possessed by agents.	733	437
18. Brings information to the attention of agents, written or otherwise, that is of value to them in their work.	730	079
11. Maintains a professional relationship with staff members.	718	026
14. Utilizes research evidence when considering solutions to problems.	692	433

[a]Statements listed in descending order of loading. Statements located in section III, survey I, Appendix A.

[b]Decimals omitted.

Appendix Table 8. A list of 79 county average Administrative Professional Leadership scores in descending order (6-point scale)

APL score	APL score	APL score	APl score
5.22	4.77	4.25	3.60
5.14	4.76	4.21	3.58
5.13	4.71	4.16	3.55
5.09	4.67	4.15	3.53
5.06	4.57	4.11	3.49
4.99	4.57	4.07	3.49
4.97	4.56	4.05	3.44
4.95	4.53	4.04	3.34
4.94	4.52	4.00	3.33
4.92	4.51	3.95	3.26
4.89	4.51	3.94	3.23
4.89	4.45	3.92	3.14
4.85	4.42	3.91	3.09
4.82	4.42	3.89	3.06
4.82	4.42	3.78	2.98
4.81	4.36	3.76	2.97
4.77	4.32	3.73	2.90
4.77	4.31	3.73	2.82
4.77	4.28	3.71	2.32
4.77	4.28	3.60	

Average = 4.16
Median = 4.28
Range = 5.22 to 2.32
SD = .673

Results

Organizational Consequences

H_1: APL (X_{10}) $\xrightarrow{+}$ Staff morale (Y_3)

$\hat{r}X_{10} \cdot Y_3 = .319$

$t(417) = 6.857$ versus $t_{.95}(120) = 1.658$

H_2: APL (X_{10}) $\xrightarrow{+}$ Performance (Y_4)

$\hat{r}X_{10} \cdot Y_4 = .283$

$t(417) = 6.083$ versus $t_{.95}(120) = 1.658$

Both hypotheses concerning the relationships between APL and organizational consequences were supported at <.05 level of significance. Thus, the extent to which CEC conform to an APL concept of their role does appear to have important organizational consequences in terms of morale and a professional orientation to performance.

Determinants of APL

A. CEC-agent relationships

H_{31}: Managerial support (X_1) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_1)

H_{32}: Equality (X_2) $\xrightarrow{-}$ APL (Y_1)

H_{33}: Support in conflict situations (X_3) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_1)

Based on the results presented in Table 6, all three hypotheses concerning CEC-agent relationships and APL were supported both individually and collectively at <.05 level of significance. Thus, CEC had higher APL scores where they offered agents greater

Table 6. Pearson's Product-Moment correlations of CEC-agent relationships (X_i) with APL (Y_1), the contribution of each X_i to R^2, and regression coefficients (b_i)

X_i	X_1	X_2	X_3	Y_1	(Part $\hat{r}$)^{2a}	$\hat{b}i$	t(415)	p[b]
X_1	----	-.191	.431	.701	.4908	1.2178	16.098	$<$.0005
X_2		-----	-.267	-.258	.0076	- .0802	- 2.611	$<$.01
X_3			-----	.480	.0390	.1645	5.239	$<$.0005
Y_1				-----				

$\hat{R}_{Y_1 \cdot X_1X_2X_3}$ = .7330, $\hat{R}^2$ = .5373

F(3,415) = 160.663 versus $F_{.95}$ (3,400) = 2.62

[a] (Part $\hat{r}$)^2 = contribution to R^2.

[b] one-tailed test.

managerial support, were more equal in their relationships, and gave agents more support in conflict situations.

B. CEC Attributes

H_{41}: Undergraduate major (X_4) $\xrightarrow{-}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{42}: Administration (X_5) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{43}: Education (X_6) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{44}: Sociology (X_7) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{45}: Tenure (X_8) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

H_{46}: Internalization of APL concept of role (X_9) $\xrightarrow{+}$ APL (Y_2)

As can be seen from Table 7, H_{46} was the only hypothesis supported at $\leq .05$ level when all variables were analyzed collectively. Those CEC who considered the APL concept of their role to be very important (measure of internalization) had higher APL scores. Although the regression coefficient ($\hat{b}_8$) was significantly different from zero at the .05 level, the negative sign was unexpected; therefore, H_{45} as stated was not confirmed. The simple relationship between the number of courses taken in sociology and APL (H_{44}) was significant at the .05 level; however, when adjustments were made for the other variables in the equation, the relationship did not hold up at the .05 level.

Adjustment for Agent-Observer Personal Characteristics

It is possible that the above findings might be more attributable

Table 7. Pearson's Product-Moment correlations of County Extension Chairman attributes (X_i) with Administrative Professional Leadership (Y_2) means and standard deviations, the contribution of each (X_i) to R^2, and regression coefficients (b_i)

X_i	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8	X_9	Y_2	$\bar{x}$	SD	(Part $\hat{r}$)^{2a}	$\hat{b}_i$	t(72)	p^b
X_4	--	.068	-.607*	-.009	.063	.042	-.101	1.582	.496	.0103	-.098	- .521	>.25
X_5		--	.147	.420*	-.050	.189	.147	1.266	1.046	.0029	.001	.019	>.25
X_6			--	.502*	-.063	.030	.178	3.203	2.738	.0002	.004	.103	>.25
X_7				--	-.128	.068	.253*	1.582	1.247	.0599	.104	1.392	<.10
X_8					--	-.089	-.250*	21.595	6.776	.0468	-.019	-1.810	<.05
X_9						--	.328*	5.227	.429	.0858	.470	2.789	<.005
Y_2							--	4.160	.673	--	--	--	--

$\hat{R}_{Y_2 \cdot X_4X_5X_6X_7X_8X_9} = .4537$, $\hat{R}^2 = .2059$

$F(6,72) = 3.111$ versus $F_{.95}(6,70) = 2.23$

[a]Contribution to $\hat{R}^2$. [b]One-tailed test. *$r \geq 232$, $p \leq .05$ (N=70).

to agent-observers than to variation in behavior observed. To examine this problem, four agent-observer personal characteristics (sex, level of education, tenure, and career satisfaction) were ordered into a multiple regression equation followed by the three measures of CEC-agent relationships (managerial support, equality and support in conflict situations) and the dependent variable, APL. As can be seen from Tables 6 and 8, the regression coefficients for before and after adjusting for the effects of the agent-observer personal characteristics were:

CEC-agent relationships	Before	After
Managerial support	$\hat{b}_1 = 1.218$	1.179
Equality	$\hat{b}_2 = -.080$	-.072
Support in conflict situations	$\hat{b}_3 = .165$	.159

The important finding was that the personal characteristics had essentially no effect on the regression coefficients for the three measures of CEC-agent relationships. All three relationships remained significant at $\leq .05$ level.

The same procedure was used with staff morale (Y_3) as the dependent variable. As can be seen in Table 9, essentially the same results were found with staff morale as with APL as the dependent variable.

Table 8. Pearson's Product-Moment correlations of agent-observer personal characteristics (C_i) with County Extension Chairman-agent relationships (X_i) and with Administrative Professional Leadership (Y_1) means and standard deviations; the contribution of each C_i and X_i to R^2; and regression coefficients (b_i)

C_i	C_1	C_2	C_3	C_4	X_1	X_2	X_3	Y_1	$\bar{x}$	SD	(Part $\hat{r}$)^{2a}	$\hat{b}_i$	t(411)	p^b
C_1	--	.174*	.055	.070	.031	-.068	.064	.190*	1.501	.501	.0361	.285	4.217	<.001
C_2		--	.178*	-.050	-.013	.054	-.043	.050	1.883	.648	.0003	.090	1.707	>.05
C_3			--	.056	-.032	.020	-.091	-.047	10.456	8.124	.0037	- .004	- .978	>.30
C_4				--	.188*	-.070	.073	.234*	4.395	.826	.0518	.125	3.046	<.005
X_1					--	-.191*	.431*	.701*	3.899	.503	.4395	1.179	15.901	<.0005
X_2						--	-.267*	-.258*	2.573	1.159	.0062	- .072	- 2.435	<.01
X_3							--	.480*	4.138	1.234	.0355	.159	5.229	<.0005
Y_1								--	4.157	1.024	--	--	--	

$\hat{R}_{Y_1 \cdot C_1C_2C_3C_4X_1X_2X_3} = .7570$, $\hat{R}^2 = .5731$

$F(7,411) = 78.807$ versus $F_{.95}(7,400) = 2.03$

[a]Contribution to $\hat{R}^2$.

[b]C_i = two-tailed test; X_i = one-tailed test.

*$r \geq .098$; $p \leq .05$ (N=400).

Table 9. Pearson's Product-Moment correlations of agent-observer personal characteristics (C_i) with County Extension Chairman-agent relationships (X_i), Administrative Professional Leadership (X_{10}), and staff morale (Y_3) means and standard deviations; the contribution of each C_i and X_i to R^2; and regression coefficients (b_i)

C_i	C_1	C_2	C_3	C_4	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_{10}	Y_3	$\bar{x}$	SD	(Part $\hat{r}$)^{2a}	$\hat{b}_i$	t(410)	p[b]
C_1	--	.174*	.055	.070	.031	-.068	.064	.190*	-.008	1.501	.501	.0001	-.090	-1.390	>.10
C_2		--	.178*	-.050	-.013	.054	-.043	.050	-.058	1.883	.648	.0033	-.055	-1.110	>.20
C_3			--	.056	-.032	.020	-.091	-.047	.017	10.456	8.124	.0008	.003	.759	>.40
C_4				--	.188*	-.070	.073	.234*	.269*	4.395	.826	.0706	.168	4.296	<.001
X_1					--	-.191*	.431*	.701*	.253*	3.899	.503	.0002	.029	.325	>.25
X_2						--	.267*	-.258*	-.099	2.573	1.159	.0000	-.004	-.145	>.25
X_3							--	.480*	.186*	4.138	1.234	.0019	.025	.859	>.15
X_{10}								--	.319*	4.157	1.024	.0757	.166	3.581	<.0005
Y_3									--	4.369	.683	--			

$\hat{R}_{Y_3 \cdot C_1C_2C_3C_4X_1X_2X_3X_{10}} = .3906$, $\hat{R}^2 = .1526$

$F(8,410) = 9.227$ versus $F_{.95}(8,400) = 1.96$

[a]Contribution to $\hat{R}^2$.

[b]C_i = two-tailed test. X_i = one-tailed test.

*$r \geq .098$; $p \leq .05$ (N=400).

Conclusions

The findings of this study offer empirical support for the emerging concept of county Extension organization and administration. The positive relationship between APL and agents' morale and their professional orientation to performance provides some justification for advocating that CEC conform to a staff leader definition of their role. Thus, a high degree of CEC conformity to an APL concept of their role appears to have important organizational consequences.

A major part of this study focused on examining sources of variation in CEC conformity to an APL concept of their role. The 79 CEC participating in the study varied considerably in providing APL to agents as reported by agent-observers. Thus, what appeared to account for this variation? This study proposed that the variation was in part based on the premise of a three-phased process of socialization for CEC. It was reasoned that during their socialization experiences, CEC internalized a somewhat idealized APL concept of their role. Furthermore, when CEC experienced reality testing as administrators of professional staffs, it was assumed that they would encounter the obstacles of agent resistance and limited time in conforming to an APL concept of their role. Thus, conformity to the APL concept of their role was assumed to be dependent in part on their success

in negotiating these obstacles.

The findings suggest that where CEC are observed as providing agents with managerial type support, minimizing distinctions in status and supporting agents in conflict situations, then CEC are more likely to negotiate the postulated obstacles and have a higher degree of conformity to an APL concept of their role. Course work in sociology and internalization of the APL concept of their role seem to be important CEC attributes in negotiating the obstacles. The utilization of these strategies appear to be important in negotiating the obstacles to APL. Since most of the hypotheses derived from the theoretical formulation received empirical support, the utility of the formulation was supported.

After a partial examination of variation in agent-observer reports, it was concluded that agent-observers reported variations in behavior observed in a relatively unbiased manner.

Implications for Further Research

While this study focused on APL in the North Carolina Extension Service, the concepts and theoretical formulation have implications for studying leadership in any professionally staffed organization. Similar type studies are needed in a variety of professionally staffed organizations to determine if the findings are generalizable.

This study examined two of many measures that might be used for organizational consequences. Other measures such as job satisfaction of agents, the actual adoption of practices by Extension's clientele and clientele support need to be related to APL.

This study assumed that morale results from APL; however, it was not examined. It may be that high agent morale leads to APL rather than vice versa. One might find that staff morale specifies the relationship between APL and performance.

Other determinants of APL need investigating. For example, what are the relationships between APL and leadership from supervisors? It is possible that CEC provide agents the type of leadership they receive from their supervisors.

This study assumed that CEC confront two obstacles as they try to coordinate and influence agent performance. Another obstacle might be the lack of role consensus between CEC and agents.

These are but a few of the many questions worthy of systematic examination. This researcher hopes that this study will be of some assistance to others who seek answers to these and similar questions.

References

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